

Preparing to succeed at the Objective: Given a format, self-identified topic, and research from scholarly sources, the learners will select specific ideas from sources and identify the scope of the idea to best support purpose, audience and topic.

Question: I have this all this great information from a source that I want to use in my essay; how do I put it into my essay?

Before you set out to incorporate research that you have found into your essay, you need to make sure you understand how this is done and what your options are. There are three ways to incorporate source information into an essay. These will depend upon how much you want to use.

- Quotation
- Paraphrase
- Summary

First: What do they mean?

Quotation – A quotation is a word-for-word segment from the source. Quotes must match exactly and be attributed to the author. Quoting should be done sparingly, and there needs to be a good reason to quote.

Paraphrase – A paraphrase is putting a passage from the source material into your own words, usually shorter than the original passage, condensing a broad segment of information. The paraphrase must be attributed to the original source. To make sure that you understand how to write a paraphrase, [complete this tutorial](#). Important: An acceptable paraphrase is a balance between the ideas of the source and your own words that convey those ideas.

Summary – A summary involves putting the main ideas of the passage into your own words, including only the main point(s). It is necessary to attribute the summarized ideas to the original source. A summary is significantly shorter than the original, significantly shorter than a paraphrase, and serves as a broad overview of the source material. A good summary means that you understand the text. To make sure you understand the finer points of summarizing, [read this handout](#).

When a paraphrase or summary is done improperly, both yours and the source's meaning and purpose will be as difficult to comprehend as this leopard-spotted dog.

Now that I know what they mean, how do I know which one to use?

You must remember that most of your paper should be in your own words, so don't overuse the quotations. The reader wants to know that you know what you are talking about, which means accurate paraphrases and summaries should be considered first.

Now it's time to ask yourself questions. These questions help in determining which will work better for you: the quotation, the paraphrase, or the summary.

Should I quote?

Anytime you are using someone else's words in your paper, you must put them in quotation marks and document the source. Before you use that quotation, answer the following questions:

- Do I have a good reason for using this, or am I just filling up space?
- Does the author use wording that is distinctive, interesting, or insightful that would be lost if I tried to paraphrase it?
- Am I quoting a passage because I don't understand it enough to paraphrase it?
- Does the whole sentence need to be quoted or should I just quote a choice word or phrase instead?
- Does the quote lend support to the position of my paper?
- Do I employ quotations from the other side?
- Does it sound like I am relying too heavily upon the quotes and not drawing my own conclusions?

Source: Wilhoit, Stephen W. *A Brief Guide to Writing from Readings: Second Edition*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001.

Should I paraphrase?

Again, a paraphrase is an indirect quotation that must be documented because it relates in your own words and style the thoughts you have borrowed from another person. Paraphrases are more flexible than quotations. They fit more smoothly into your text, and you can express your own interpretations as you paraphrase. Before you paraphrase, answer the following questions:

- Do I need to restate a difficult passage the reader may not understand?
- Do I need to explain or interpret concepts or unfamiliar terms?
- Do I need to make abstract facts and ideas concrete?

Watch out with paraphrasing: plagiarism will occur if all you are doing is changing a word here and there. A true paraphrase involves changing sentence structure of the original and using different words but conveying the same meaning as the source.

Should I summarize?

Again, a summary involves putting the main ideas of a passage into your own words. Like a quotation and a paraphrase, you must document the source.

By summarizing, you will offer as accurately as possible the full sense of the original, but in a more condensed form. Before you write a summary, answer the following questions:

- Do I understand the information enough to use only my own words?
- Do I need a paragraph, a section, or even an entire chapter or article that is valuable to me for its major point and not for all the particulars?
- Do I need to include very little detail from the passage? (If you need detail, then paraphrase)
- Do I need a mixture of reducing a long text to a short text and to present only relevant information?

Nagging Reminder: You must remember that most of your paper should be in your own words, so don't overuse the quotations. The reader wants to know that you know what you are talking about, which means accurate paraphrases and summaries should be considered first.